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From: ted
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Subject: NELSON RESPONSE TO 'WIRED' LIBEL
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- FEEL FREE TO RESEND OR REPOST
UNDER YOUR OWN NAME AND INITIATIVE. -
Originally from: Ted Nelson, 28 May, 1995.

Dear friend, or person on my mailing list:

The June issue of WIRED magazine contains an extremely nasty and mean-spirited article entitled "The Curse of Xanadu," by Gary Wolf, which purports to be the obituary of Project Xanadu. (It was available earlier at the HOTWIRED Web site, where it was used as a come-on for inaugurating HOTWIRED's pay-per-copy ecash service.)

The merely factual errors begin in the first sentence. More importantly, I believe the article contains material which is offensive, false, damaging, and dishonest in reporting, thereby meeting the legal test of libel.

The article is an affront to the alumni and veterans of the Xanadu project, some fifty of us over the years, contriving to make our endeavors look impossible and asinine; the article materially misstates the intentions of the project and our technical assertions; the article severely damages the "Xanadu" trademark, which (Wolf neglects to mention) has been divorced for two and a half years from the software he takes such pains to misrepresent and malign; and the article claims that my work in the 1960s and 1970s was "absurd," based on "inability," "ignorance" and "fantasy."

WIRED magazine is a well-funded, lavish, and very successful magazine with connections throughout the upper reaches of the computer industry, so Wolf had ample resources to research these matters thoroughly and get them right. But his supremely well-honed literary craftsmanship can leave little doubt of his malicious and destructive intent.

Accordingly, on behalf of my colleagues of Project Xanadu, and myself:
I am sending out this letter to everyone in my email files;
I will soon send a long letter to WIRED (to be available to anyone by automatic responsebot on June 8; for a copy, send any email to libel@xanadu.net after that date);
I will publish a list of errors in Wolf's piece, and related material, at http://xanadu.net/wolfsbane, opening June 8;
I will give a talk at Xerox PARC on Tuesday, June 13, pm 730, entitled "What Did He Know and When Did He Know It? Xanadu and the Curse of WIRED," summarizing my life's work to date, including my non-computer work. This will be an official part of the evening's BAYCHI meeting.

I will announce my next moves in response to the WIRED article at a press conference at the Digital World Conference in Los Angeles on Wednesday June 7, pm 230.

I cordially invite you to pass this letter on to interested individuals or newsgroups to which you believe it has legitimate relevance (but please, however enthusiastically supportive of us, do not pester inappropriate groups or individuals with it).

Sadly yours, I look forward to the full airing of the truth and to the restitution of damages resulting from this article.

Thank you.

Theodor Holm Nelson
Sapporo, Japan
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